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SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT, MENDOCINO COUNTY

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Mendocino county, [Planning commission]

WILLIAMS & MOCINE : CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

HUMAN PERCEPTION OF SCENIC QUALITIES

Human response to outside stimuli varies greatly; attitudes, training and familiarity all condition how we react to scenery as well as other experiences. Some people appreciate the grand and spectacular while others respond to the quaint or picturesque. Some find a rugged seascape inspiring while others prefer a gentle bucolic scene which evokes a sense of tranquility and peace. Both natural and man-made features contribute to scenic effect and the contrast between the two often enhances the quality of the visual experience. An example of mutual enhancement is the neat cultivated vineyard and farm house against a backdrop of natural rugged hills. Similarly, the contrast between a busy small-town scene and the surrounding quiet countryside can heighten the traveler's visual experience. Very strong natural features such as Squaw Rock, or man-made ones such as a lumber mill, add scenic interest by their forceful impact.

Mendocino County has a wealth of scenic features to please all tastes and by broad definition all its roads and highways could be considered scenic. Since the Scenic Highways Element analyzes scenic resources to provide a basis for more detailed studies and action programs, it is helpful to define and categorize the areas and features visible from the highways. The following categories are suggested for Mendocino County.

1. Rural-open grazing or grassland
2. Rural-intensive cultivation, usually orchards or vineyards
3. Deep forest
4. Inland hills, valleys and ridges
 - a. close-up view
 - b. intermediate view
 - c. distant panorama
5. River views
6. Seascape
7. Historical site
8. Unique natural area
9. Small town rural
10. Urban fringe
11. Heavy rural industry
12. Naturally sensitive areas subject to erosion or slides if developed.

Additionally, inappropriate development which destroys scenic character may be identified by the following categories:

1. Cluttered, unscreened open storage
2. Billboard cluster
3. Strip commercial development
4. Man-made features that detract from the landscape.

A highway may be designated for scenic treatment on the basis of heavy use even though it may not have natural scenic qualities or its scenic qualities have been marred by inappropriate development. To preserve existing scenic values or to make real improvements in quality, the view from the road must have integrity with all visible elements fitting and harmonious. This principle applies equally to rural Anderson Valley, the spectacular sea coast, the forests, or urban areas. This makes it necessary to consider elements which degrade the scenic qualities of highways as well as those which enhance. Generally speaking, all actions which alter the natural form of the terrain tend to be detrimental. Grading and cutting of steep hillsides leave unsightly scars. Cutting the top off a hill and perching a building at the highest point destroys the natural form and creates disharmony. Some buildings are particularly unsightly when they are undistinguished blocky structures and/or insufficiently landscaped. Derelict buildings and unkempt lots blight views as do junkyards and wrecking lots which are unscreened. Outdoor advertising structures (including buildings which are advertisements by design) are frequently the worst offenders. Even a small, brightly colored sign against a scenic background will lessen the quality of the view since our eye will fasten on the bright foreground distraction rather than on the quieter scenic background.

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

Government Code Section 65302 (h) requires a scenic highway element of all city and county general plans "for the development, establishment and protection of scenic highways." It provides for local planning of official and unofficial scenic routes. Official scenic highways are designated by the

State Scenic Highway Advisory Committee after plans have been adopted and submitted by the local jurisdictions. Highways eligible for such designation are listed in the Streets and Highways Code Section 263. In Mendocino County the highways listed as eligible are Highway 1 and the two sections of Highway 20. That portion of 101 which coincides with Route 20 (from the junction at Calpella to Willits) is eligible as well. None are officially designated. However, the County can request that consideration be given to including all or other portions of 101, or additional routes, on the eligible list. Official County Scenic Highways can also be designated by the State upon application from local jurisdictions.

After the Scenic Highway Element is locally reviewed and adopted, Mendocino County can request that corridor surveys be made by Caltrans for those highways judged suitable for designation as official or unofficial scenic highways. The County could also undertake corridor studies on its own. The corridor survey must cover land outside the highway right-of-way which contributes to the scenic value. The General Plan Guidelines published by the Council of Intergovernmental Relation, in the section dealing with the Scenic Highway Element, defines the following terms:

Scenic Corridor: The visible land area outside the highway right-of-way generally described as "the view from the road."

Official State Scenic Highway and Official County Scenic Highway: Scenic highways officially designated by the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee after application from local jurisdictions and on the list of eligible highways found in Section 263 of the Streets and Highways Code.

Rural Designated Scenic Highway: A route determining a defined visual corridor which offers an unhindered view of attractive urban scenes.

The Scenic Highway Element is not a corridor study, but rather provides the basis for such studies, either by Caltrans or the County. Although the emphasis in state legislation is on the designation of state scenic highway routes, this does not preclude local agencies from developing and adopting local scenic routes.

This may be very important in Mendocino County where so many of the local routes are highly scenic and valued for their character and quality but where there is an understandable determination to maintain a high degree of local control over regulation and development.

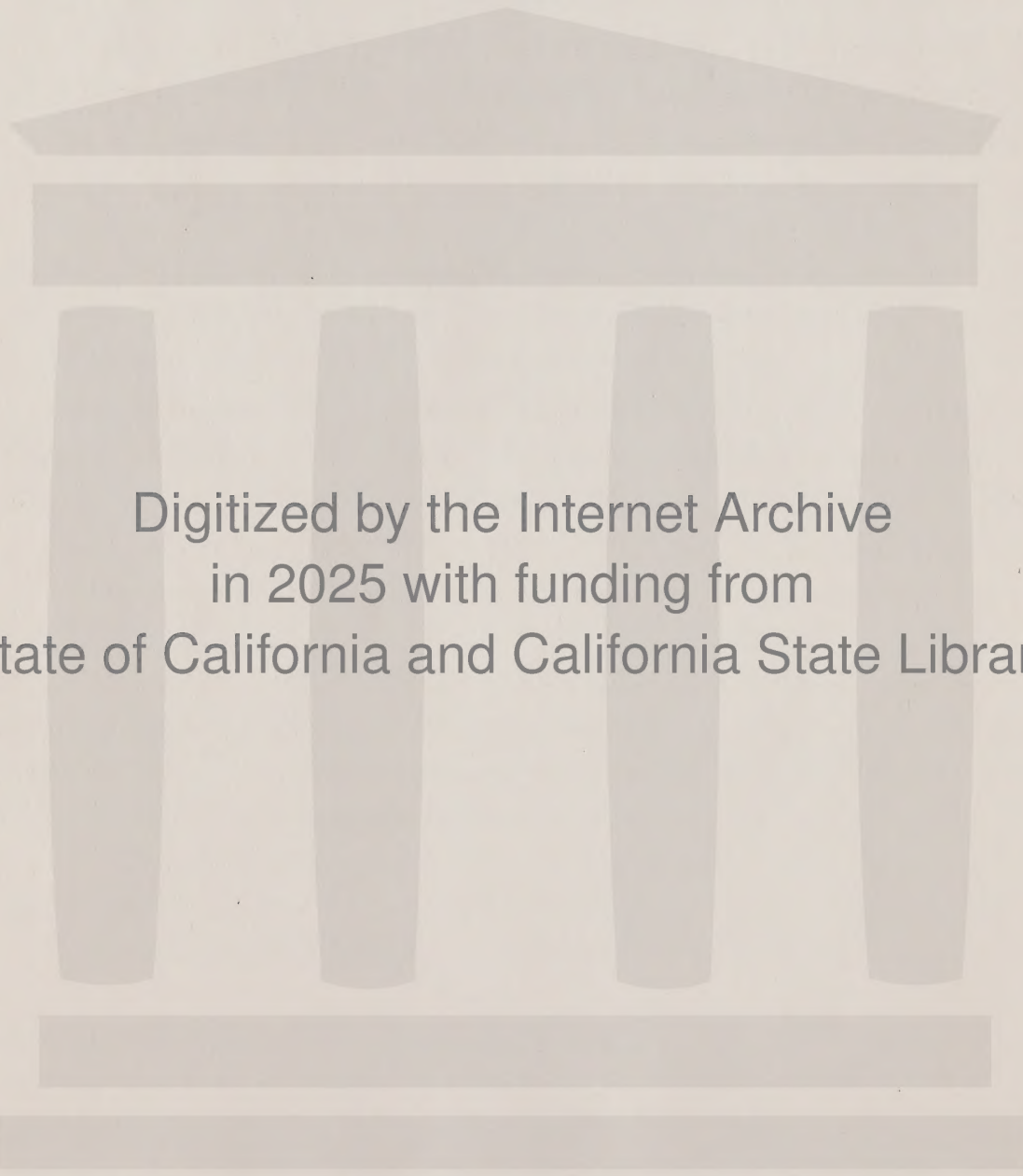
It may be possible within these guidelines and existing programs for a limited State role.

This report contains a description of what is considered useful, the importance of scenic quality and some of the problems. The report also contains several analyses of State Highway which the county has considered and the role for the protection of the scenic quality of their corridors.

The following studies are recommended for adoption as county highways: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Adoption of the above as scenic resources would not automatically require the county to take any action. The county should consider the possibility of a system of scenic resources to be used as a basis for decisions regarding the county's role, property owners, and other concerned persons in making decisions regarding the carrying out scenic highway projects.

The county should consider the possibility of using the scenic highway system as a basis for decisions regarding the county's role, property owners, and other concerned persons in making decisions regarding the carrying out scenic highway projects.



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SUMMARY

The Scenic Highway Element is one of the nine general plan elements mandated by the State. The purpose of the element is to consider scenic qualities that may be present within route corridors and develop programs for protecting those qualities.

This report contains a description of what is considered scenic, the importance of scenic quality and some of the problems. The report also contains generalized analyses of State Highways within the County and recommended policies for the protection of the scenic quality of their corridors.

The following Routes are recommended for adoption as scenic highways: 1, 20, 101, 128, and 162 - Forest Road 7.

Adoption of the Routes as Scenic Highways would not automatically impose controls upon land within their corridors. This report recommends the appointment of a citizens advisory group to assist the Board of Supervisors by working with the County staff, property owners, and other concerned persons to develop appropriate programs for carrying out scenic highway policies.

Only after acceptable programs have been formulated would the Scenic Highway Element have an impact on private property along the scenic highways. Even then, the impact at most would cause only minor discomfort to the individual while providing major benefit to the County and State.

ROUTE ANALYSES

This section contains generalized route analyses for the major highways and roads in Mendocino County. The analyses include 1973 traffic volumes as tabulated by Caltrans. This year is cited since 1974 was an unusual year due to gasoline shortages. The 1975 volumes are not yet available.

The analysis of Highway 1 includes a summary of the State Coastal Commission's preliminary recommendations for coastal routes and some discussion of possible location action. These route analyses do not include the detail necessary to legally designate scenic corridors or specify design treatment for various sections.

STATE HIGHWAY 1

State Highway 1 for its full length along the coast in Mendocino County.

Length of Route: 91 miles.

Width: Generally two-lane, except for brief segment of four-lane freeway in Mendocino-Fort Bragg area.

1973 Traffic Volumes: Average Daily Traffic (peak month) ranges from 1,400 to 16,200. The higher figure was at Fort Bragg. Volumes along undeveloped stretches of the coast are in the order of 2,000-4,000. Average Daily Traffic (annual): 750-12,700.

Topography: The highway generally runs along a coastal terrace about 100 feet above the ocean, immediately next to and above the ocean cliffs, although it moves down into river gorges, climbs along cliffs and makes a few detours across jutting headlands.

Existing Land Uses: Low intensity urban development in Fort Bragg, Fort Arena and Mendocino communities; small service centers at Rockport, Westport, Casper, Little River, Albion and Gualala. Extensive forest and grazing land; stretches of ocean front homes; fishing harbor at Noyo.

Proposed Land Uses: Continuation of existing pattern.

Physical Features of Outstanding Character: Ocean views, rocky cliffs, narrow beaches, streams cutting through gorges and extending into mountain canyons, pine, cypress and redwood trees; heavy undergrowth with ferns and rhododendrons; Pygmy Forest.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: High bridges, water towers, farm buildings, wharves, weathered seacoast architecture of residential and commercial structures.

Disruptive Factors: Buildings too close to road and crowded together blocking views; distracting signs.

Other Pertinent Factors: Highway 1 is within the jurisdiction of the State Coastal Zone Conservation Commission. Relative to scenic highways, the Preliminary Coastal Plan contains the following recommendations:

- State Highway 1 and all eligible State Highways and County roads should be designated as part of the Scenic Highway Program (p. 145).
- Scenic routes shall be designed, constructed and maintained with the highest regard for aesthetic considerations (p. 146).
- Viewshed and roadside controls shall be required to protect the scenic qualities of roadway scenic corridors (p. 147).
- Highway 1 in rural areas of the California coastline shall be kept a scenic two-lane highway. Improvements shall be limited to those needed for safety and for developing vista areas, parking and other amenities of scenic routes (p. 144).

In 1966 the County Planning Commission asked the State to conduct a scenic highway study of Route 1. This was done during 1966 and 1967 for a 16-mile portion between the intersections of Route 1 with Route 128 and Jughandle Creek. Although the study was favorable, the designation was not made.

Summary: Highway 1 in Mendocino County is well known for traversing scenic terrain of outstanding quality. There is concern, however, that continued residential development along the coast would detract from this quality. The Coastal Commission's Preliminary Plan reflects this concern and recommends measures to preserve the quality of the coast and regulate development accordingly.

STATE HIGHWAY 101

State Highway 101 from South County Line to beginning of freeway Knight's Hill.

Length of Route: Approximately 17 miles.

Type and Width: Expressway except through town of Hopland; width of right-of-way:

Traffic Volume 1973: Average Daily Traffic (peak month): 3,900-20,200.
Average Daily Traffic (annual): 3,200-12,800.

Topography: The route closely parallels the Russian River, rising from slightly below 400 feet to approximately 750 feet at northern end of section. Hills rise steeply on both sides of Valley. The southern portion of the River Valley is very narrow with steep hills and rugged rock outcroppings on both sides. Close to Hopland, the river canyon widens into Sanel Valley and is good level agricultural land. The rail line follows the same general route.

Existing Land Uses: Primarily open grazing land or unused; orchards and vineyards concentrated in Sanel Valley close to the town of Hopland, a small rural service center.

Planned Land Uses: Slow growth in Hopland; continued intensive and extensive agriculture.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: River gorge in southern section, Squaw Rock, views of hills and ridges.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: Vineyards and orchards in Hopland area; small town character and victorian buildings in Hopland; rail line, small commercial development at Pieta Creek (River Bend).

Disruptive Elements: Occasional billboards in open country with concentration on south edge of Hopland; urban clutter on fringes of Hopland.

Other Pertinent Factors: Much of the adjacent land is presently either in Forest Conservation or Agriculture Conservation zoning which offers protection of the scenic qualities. However, the southern portion to the west of the highway is zoned A-1, which allows a very wide range of uses through the use permit procedure and provides little protection. There is a road-side rest and view point at Squaw Rock.

Summary: This section features qualities which range from spectacular Squaw Rock and the Russian River to pastoral Sanel Valley. The rail line snaking along the narrow river gorge and visible from some sections of the highway, is an interesting element in its adaptation to the rugged terrain. Future freeway construction through the narrow valley and unplanned spotty development in the A-1 area could be very damaging to the scenic quality. Since this section of highway is heavily traveled and provides a highly scenic entrance to Mendocino County, careful design should be employed to protect the scenic resources of the area.

State Highway 101 Freeway section from near Knight's Hill to Junction of Route 20.

Length of Route: Approximately 14 miles.

Type and Width: Freeway width 180-200 feet.

Traffic Volume, 1973: Average Daily Traffic (peak month): 10,000 to 18,000 at junction of Route 20; Average Daily Traffic (annual): 7,000 to 11,600.

Topography: Highway 101 departs from the River and crosses the low pass over Knight's Hill to enter the broad Yokayo Valley. An east fork joins the Russian River which flows down the east side of the Valley. Rolling to rugged hills line both sides, giving distant panoramas of ridges and ranges.

Existing Land Uses: Orchards and vineyards in level valley land, grazing on slopes; Retch Plant in rural south end of area; urban uses at Ukiah, the County seat; suburban development mixed with agriculture to north of Ukiah in Calpella - mobile home parks adjacent to freeways. Large Masonite Plant at Ukiah; large lumber mill at Calpella.

Planned Land Uses: Additional urbanization including industrial area in north section.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: The Valley panorama seen from the southern entrance; eastern ranges.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: Orchards and vineyards; lumber mill, City of Ukiah, Masonite factory.

Disruptive Elements: Retch Plant (see summary); lack of freeway planting and barren interchange areas in urban sections; billboards, clutter and signs along the urban fringes, particularly between Ukiah and Calpella; roofline views of mobile home parks; sewage treatment plant just south of Ukiah.

Other Pertinent Factors: Some agricultural and forest conservation zoning borders the route though much of it is in the less restrictive A-1 zone.

Summary: Urban scatteration is a problem in this developable section of the route. The urban sections of freeway should be better landscaped, particularly at the interchanges. The sweeping vistas of the Valley and of the surrounding hills are well worth preserving. Since this is the most urban section of the County and the most heavily traveled portion of Highway 101, it deserves scenic treatment and protection.

The Retch Plant, categorized as a disruptive man-made element, is an isolated industrial use in a rural setting. The building and premises are neat, clean and modern and the company is to be complimented on the high level of maintenance. However, the plant is a large blocky building

painted bright red-orange; landscaping around it and the parking lot is limited to low plantings and grass. The impact of the harsh "manufactured" structure in the soft rural countryside is startling and inappropriate. It can be noted that the Golden Gate Bridge is a very similar hue. The soaring bridge structure over the dramatic ocean gateway between the two monumental headlands appears light, airy, and highly appropriate; the solid low manufacturing building, in an attractive but less dramatic setting, appears heavy and out-of-place -- startling rather than pleasing.

Two other types of factory uses in Mendocino County can be contrasted with the Retech Plant. First, the lumber mills and related hardboard factories which are interesting because the piles of logs and equipment reflect the nature of the business and the viewer sees a bit of the basic industry of the area; second, the handsome new wineries and tasting rooms constructed of natural materials and designed to fit the rural setting. The Retech building lacks both these attributes and seems to ignore the natural attributes of the site altogether. The company could exploit the value of its setting by repainting the building in natural earth tones and landscaping in scale with the bulk of the building. Tall trees, for instance, would complement the structure and add to its quality. With such measures, the development could enhance rather than detract from the scenic nature of the area.

Dual Section State Highway 101 and Highway 209 from Southern Junction of Route 20 East to Willits, Junction of Route 20 West.

Length of Route: Approximately 15 miles.

Type and Width: Approximately 12 miles freeway; 3 miles major streets in Willits.

Traffic Volume, 1973: Average Daily Traffic (peak monthly): 11,900 to 18,000. Average Daily Traffic (annual): 7,600 to 11,900.

Topography: The highway traverses Redwood Valley at about 800 foot elevation. Redwood Valley is a northern extension of the Yokayo Valley and is still in the Russian River basin. Leaving the Valley, the route climbs rapidly to almost 2,000 feet, then drops in to Little Lake Valley at about 1,600 feet elevation. The ridge section of the route is rugged and crosses a narrow pass into the Eel River drainage basin. In some areas, the land drops off and there are wide views from the highway.

Existing Land Uses: Redwood Valley is more or less a bedroom suburb for Ukiah; a low density-semi-rural development with generally large lots and parcels, many of which are vacant. It also has some large mobile homes parks and many mobile homes on individual parcels. Some agriculture, primarily vineyards and pear orchards, still exist in Redwood Valley; and one wine-tasting room is located just north of the southern junction. South of Willits, Little Lake Valley has considerable cultivated land. The urbanized area of Willits extends south and tends to sprawl in a disordered manner.

Proposed Land Uses: The possible location of the new community college in Redwood Valley close to the freeway is still an unsettled issue. Redwood Valley has just approved a large water supply loan (for domestic and agricultural use) which will add impetus to both new suburban development and agriculture. The citizens advisory committee of Redwood Valley has adopted a policy for the protection of agriculture. No major development is projected for Willits which continues to grow very slowly.

Physical Features of Outstanding Character: Rugged country on the ridge; views over Little Lake Valley; large timber stands and natural areas.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: The Weibel winery building, Skunk Railroad and Depot at Willits.

Disruptive Factors: Urban sprawl and clutter south of Willits.

Other Pertinent Factors: Most of the land adjoining the Highway is zoned A-1, the least restrictive zoning classification in the ordinance.

Summary: This is a heavily traveled section of highway and is a link in the recreation route from the Sacramento area to the northern coast and well worth inclusion in the scenic highway category. Portions are heavily wooded. Because it is also Highway 20, it is the only portion of Highway 101 which is on the current State eligibility lists for inclusion as a scenic highway.

The Weibel building, well designed and constructed of stone and natural materials, is an outstanding example of appropriate development for Mendocino County's scenic rural environment. Wine tasting and sales buildings of this quality enhance the view and add interest for tourists and residents alike. The Skunk Railroad, an old lumbering line and current tourist attraction, runs from Willits to Fort Bragg.

Highway 101 north boundary of Willits to Longvale Road.

Length of Route: Approximately 10 miles.

Type and Width: Divided Expressway approximately 200 feet (varies) in part two-lane expressway.

Traffic Volume, 1973: Average Daily Traffic (peak month) 20,000 within Willits, 10,000 at north city limits, 7,000 at north end. Average Daily Traffic (annual) 12,800 within Willits, 6,300 at north city limits, 3,800 at north end.

Topography: The highway continues for about 3½ miles to the north end of Little Lake Valley. The rail line generally parallels the road along the west end of the level valley floor. At the lower northern end of the Valley, the rail line veers west to drop gradually with Outlet Creek winding through the hills; the highway crosses a slightly higher eastern pass through narrow Reeves Canyon. It climbs to almost 1,600 feet, then drops down to below 1,200 feet to rejoin the railroad and Outlet Creek at the small hamlet of Arnold. Both highway and railroad then continue down, dropping less than 100 feet, in approximately 3 miles. At Longvale Junction the creek, rail line and State Route 162 head eastward to join Eel River while Highway 101 continues northward. Both Reeves Canyon and the Outlet Creek Canyon are narrow with steep hills close to the road.

Existing Land Uses: Some orchards, vineyards and other agriculture north of Willits in Little Lake Valley; very little development in the rugged canyon areas; at Arnold and Longvale Junction two or three old commercial buildings which have been vacant for some time. Existing rest stop for southbound traffic (just south of Longvale Junction.)

Proposed Land Uses: same.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: Rugged hills, heavily wooded.

Disruptive Elements: Cluttered urban fringe including billboards north of Willits; occasional billboards in open countryside.

Other pertinent Factors: Most of area is zoned A-1 Unclassified.

Summary: The route traverses some extremely scenic natural areas, many of which are totally undeveloped and unspoiled. The highway is well designed and fitted to the topography.

Highway 101, Longvale Junction (Route 162) to Leggett (Junction of Route 20)

Length of Route: 32 miles.

Type and Width: 25 miles two-lane expressway, 6 miles freeway.

Topography: The highway winds through fairly rugged terrain traveling up Long Valley Creek for approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles and then enters Long Valley proper. At the south end of the Valley is an almost imperceptible divide separating Long Valley Creek (flowing south) from Tenmile Creek (flowing north). This is actually the divide between the drainage basin of the Eel and the south fork of the Eel River. The complexities of the drainage systems which the highway follows demonstrate the folded, rugged nature of the terrain. "Long Valley" is quite descriptive of the Valley, which is about 5 miles long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide. The highway follows the east side, passing through the unincorporated town of Laytonville towards the north end. The elevation at this point is approximately 1,700 feet. The highway continues northwest through rolling terrain, dropping with Tenmile Creek to about 1,500 feet in the next 5 miles. Here it leaves the creek and crosses Rattlesnake Summit at 1,734 feet. Peaks of over 3,700 feet rise at distances of 3 to 4 miles away from each side of the highway. The highway joins and follows Rattlesnake Creek turning almost due west for about 10 miles where it reaches the South Fork of the Eel. Elevation here is about 1,300 feet with higher rolling to steep hills on each side. The highway crosses two small Valleys (Dann and Leggett) and reaches the town of Leggett and the junction of Highway 208.

Existing Land Uses: Long Valley has some agriculture and a lumber mill in addition to the small town of Laytonville, where restaurants and gas stations serve tourists. Scattered dwellings are located in Dann Valley. Leggett is a small rural and tourist service center. Lumber operations are not visible from the highway though much timber is being cut in the northern portion of the County. Some grazing occurs. Generally the land is open and, if utilized, is for very non-intensive use. There is

off road rest stop for northbound traffic.

Planned Land Uses: No change foreseen.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: Varied topography of natural interest; large stands of trees; wide views; creekside views; general natural and unspoiled appearance; open unsettled character.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: Old hotel in Laytonville.

Disruptive Features: Scattered, unattractive development south of Laytonville; signs and unattractive disorganized commercial uses as well; some of the same close to Leggett.

Other Pertinent Factors: Virtually the entire route travels through land zoned A-1 Unclassified.

Summary: Generally, this is an attractive, unspoiled route with much scenic interest. The least attractive section is close to Laytonville where lack of design and land use controls are evident. The economy of this lightly populated section of the County is heavily dependent on the lumber industry which has suffered setbacks in the last year. As a result, there has been little substantial new investment, either in facilities for local service or in tourist-operated businesses such as motels and restaurants. Laytonville could profit greatly from design and development studies and from assistance for development of tourist oriented services in keeping with rural scenic nature of the area. This route is the gateway to the redwood country and the first giant trees appear as it approaches Leggett. It deserves protection and enhancement by all feasible means.

Highway 101 Leggett to North County Line.

Length of Route: 13 miles.

Type and Width: 10 miles expressway, 3 miles freeway.

Topography: The highway continues a winding northward course following the South Fork of the Eel River. The topography close to Leggett is rolling; becoming more steep and rugged farther north. Some 4 miles north of Leggett the road hugs the river closely to avoid very steep terrain to the east. Beyond the river canyon widens into almost a small valley and the topography is less extreme.

Existing Land Uses: Mainly open and vacant; lumbering in the hinterland but not visible; small town of Piercy and scattered rural dwellings; some grazing; Standish Hickey and Smithe Redwoods State Parks.

Planned Land Uses: Continuation of existing pattern.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: Heavy forests and redwoods, including State Reservation; varied topography and extremely interesting views of hills, steep precipices and the river.

Man-Made Features of Outstanding Character: State Parks, campsite at Standish Hickey.

Disruptive Factors: Intermittent signs and a few unattractive commercial uses.

Other Pertinent Factors: At Piercy, there is a small area zoned for Upland Recreation. Rest of route is zoned A-1 Unclassified.

Summary: This is one of the most interesting and attractive sections of the Redwood Highway. It is virtually unspoiled and deserves protection as a scenic asset and unique forest reserve.

STATE HIGHWAY 162

State Highway 162 from junction of Highway 101 to north of Covelo and Forest Road 7 to east County line.

Length of Route: Approximately 34 miles -- Forest Road 7, approximately 15 miles in Mendocino County.

Type and Width: Two-lane highway -- portion of Forest Road 7 unpaved.

Traffic Volume, 1973: Average daily traffic, (peak month): 1,050 at junction of 101; 720 at Dos Rios; 2,200 near Covelo. Volumes unknown for Forest Road 7. Average daily traffic (annual): 570 at junction of 101; 400 at Dos Rios, 1,200 near Covelo.

Topography: Highway 162 leaves 101 following Outlet Creek down to its junction with the Eel River at approximately 1,050 feet elevation. It continues along the Eel, falling to about 900 feet at Dos Rios where the Middle Fork joins the main Eel River. The railroad follows the same stream course to Dos Rios. There the railroad heads north following the Eel while Route 162 continues east up the Middle Fork for a short distance. At an elevation of approximately 1,100 feet the highway leaves the River, rising rapidly up the side of the rugged canyon. It traverses rugged high country reaching over 2,000 feet before making a sharp descent into Round Valley. The Valley floor is approximately 50 square miles, almost level but sloping gently to the southeast. It drains by a circuitous route into the Middle Fork of the Eel. Covelo, in the north-central Valley, is at approximately 1,400 feet elevation. Highway 162 traverses the Valley on a north-south section line passing through Covelo, officially ending a few miles north.

The road turns east into Williams Valley and hence into Mendocino National Forest. Here it is actually a County road leased to the United States Forest Service and known as Forest Road 7. Further east, in Glenn County,

it again becomes State Highway 162. About thirty miles of the Forest Road is unpaved (about 15 miles in each County). In Mendocino County the road again joins the Middle Fork of the Eel for about 10 miles, then crosses Mendocino Pass at over 3,000 feet. The terrain is varied, rugged and scenic.

Existing Land Uses: Along the western portion of 162: range land, brushy forest, some unused land in hill area; gravel extraction plant at Dos Rios; agriculture in Round Valley; rural small town uses in Covelo; lumber mill to north Valley at end of State route. Forest Road 7: National Forest reserves and lumbering.

Proposed Land Uses: Continued agriculture in Round Valley; minor urban expansion in Covelo; lumber mill may cease present operation in future but will probably continue to operate at a lesser, local level; National Forest plan, probably with multiple use provisions, now being formulated.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: Entire route is highly scenic and unspoiled; outstanding views of river canyon and rock formations as road rises from the Middle Fork to the western summit above Round Valley; views of the Valley from crest on 162 and on Forest Road 7, offer a spectacular contrast to the forested hill views and snow covered peaks ringing the Valley (usually snow covered until July). National Forest environment is natural and highly scenic.

Man-made Features of Outstanding Character: Agricultural fields and orchards in Valley; rural victorian character of Covelo; Indian cultural and tourist facilities planned for near future near Covelo.

Disruptive Elements: Narrow bridge and right angle turn in Highway 162 at Dos Rios is unattractive, dangerous and frequently closed in winter. (Under study by Caltrans and due for corrective improvements within next few years).

Other Pertinent Factors: About one quarter of Highway 162 passes through areas zoned for Forest Reserve with the rest in the A-1 unclassified zone. Caltrans shows a "proposed State Highway, routing not determined" following the general alignment of Forest Road 7. The Round Valley General Plan Advisory Committee adopted two pertinent policies in June, 1975: Highway 162 should be studied for possible inclusion in the Scenic Highway system and Forest Road 7 should be improved to an all-weather highway. These policies were adopted because the residents place a high value on the scenic character and also realize that these same qualities can be a major economic asset to the community, if protected and enhanced. With the decline in lumbering, a new economic base and local job source must be found if Round Valley and Covelo are to continue to provide a good living environment. The community desires to promote compatible tourist and outdoor recreation enterprises as the best way to solve its problems. Thus, the personal aims and the economic aims coincide, both requiring preservation and enhancement of the scenic qualities of access roads.

Summary: This route is one of the most scenic in the County and would deserve protection even if the economic needs of the residents of Round Valley were not taken into account. Consideration of both factors increases the need for action. Extension of Highway 162 through the National Forest and improvement to all weather status would open a new route (in addition to Highway 20) from the Sacramento Metropolitan Area, through a beautiful outdoor recreation area, into Round Valley and on to the coast. It definitely would increase the scenic and recreational opportunities for residents of northern California and job opportunity in Round Valley and should be considered for the near future. Present low traffic volumes would certainly increase.

STATE HIGHWAY 20

State Highway 20 from Junction of Highway 101 at Calpella east to Mendocino-Lake County line.

Length of Route: Approximately 12 miles.

Type and Width: Two-lane expressway.

1973 Traffic Volumes:; Average daily traffic, (peak month) 8,500 at Calpella to 5,200 at County line. Average daily traffic (annual) 5,400 at Calpella to 3,300 at County line.

Topography: Elevation at Calpella is less than 800 feet; route rises to pass Lake Mendocino (reservoir) and continues up the East Fork of the Russian River, winding with the relatively gentle terrain. At Potter Valley Road, Route 20 leaves the East Fork and follows Cold Creek Canyon. It leaves the Russian River basin, crossing the divide at slightly over 1,500 feet. The summit is just beyond the Mendocino County line in Lake County. The route then descends via Blue Lakes and Clear Lake and continues on into the Sacramento Valley where it connects with 15, the State's main north-south highway.

Existing Land Use: Recreation facilities at Lake Mendocino; small areas of orchards and vineyards; grazing; one large-acreage undeveloped subdivision above Lake Mendocino.

Proposed Land Uses: Continuation of existing pattern.

Physical Features of Outstanding Character: River views, forest and rural hill-sides in natural or unspoiled state.

Man-made Features of Outstanding Character: Lake Mendocino reservoir for water supply, flood control and recreation; fine views of Lake from highway.

Disruptive Factors: Disruptive features have been identified. The Lake is most attractive when water levels are high and less attractive late in the year when draw-down has been heavy, exposing a large band of bare earth around the Lake.

Other Pertinent Factors: Approximately one-half the route (the western section) runs through A-1 unclassified districts. The eastern portion is almost entirely in Forest Reserve classification. The State has placed Highway 20 on the list of routes eligible for scenic highway designation.

Summary: This is an important recreation route for County residents as well as a link in the route from Sacramento to the north coast. It is highly scenic and should be protected by land use control legislation and through encouragement of appropriate development. The large parcel subdivision, so far virtually undeveloped, was poorly designed, and has access and water problems. The County has recently completed and implemented a zoning study which precludes additional random parcel splitting in the subdivision and will protect those who have real interest in developing there. This is itself was a move to protect the integrity of the countryside and the route. It also shows awareness of the problems which can be created by premature and unwise subdivision practices. The same mistakes are not likely to be repeated elsewhere.

State Highway 20 from Willits to Junction of Highway 1 just south of Fort Bragg.

Length of Route: 33 miles.

Type and Width of Route: Two-lane highway.

1973 Traffic Volumes: Average daily traffic (peak month): 3,750 at Willits, 2,300 at midpoint and 8,300 at Fort Bragg. Average daily traffic (annual): 2,350 at Willits, 1,350 at midpoint and 6,500 near Fort Bragg.

Topography: The route leaves Willits and Little Lake Valley by way of Broaddus Creek. The Skunk Railroad follows a parallel route for a few miles. The highway is fairly level, rising slowly from around 1,300 feet to approximately 1,400 feet, then ascends rapidly to about 2,000 feet. At summit it leaves the inland Eel River system and enters the coastal streams system. It descends the rugged and twisting Seven-mile Grade to an elevation of about 300 feet. At the bottom of the grade the route follows Big River for several miles then rises slightly again over Dunlop Pass and drops to its low elevation of 270 feet. The highway then rises to the ridge between the South Fork of the Noyo and the North Fork of Big River. The high elevation here is 900 feet and the Highway has entered the low range of coastal hills. Finally, it reaches the broad coastal shelf. Terrain in the central portion of this section is rugged with many outlooks and distant views from the highway. The route differs from most of those already described since it sticks to higher ground in many sections and does not follow stream courses closely.

Existing Land Uses: Some agriculture and scattered urbanization west of Willits; rangeland and some heavy forested areas; route passes through and near Jackson State Forest.

Proposed Land Uses: Continued lumbering inland; very slow urbanization close to Willits.

Natural Features of Outstanding Character: Heavy forests, scenic terrain; views of Broaddus Creek, Skunk line, and Big River; very natural unspoiled character.

Outstanding Man-made Features: Skunk line and Depot in Willits.

Disruptive Features: Minor urban sprawl in Willits; road is difficult to keep open in rainy season due to slides and steep terrain.

Other Pertinent Factors: The major portion of the route is zoned for Forest Reserve. Only the east and west ends are A-1 unclassified at the present time. The route is on the State eligibility list for inclusion in the Scenic Highway System.

Summary: Its scenic character and the fact that it is a link in the Sacramento Coast recreation route both indicate that Highway 20 should receive special attention to preserve and improve it.

COUNTY ROADS

In addition to the State Highways in Mendocino County, many of the County roads traverse areas of high scenic value. Of particular importance are those County roads which provide access to the valley communities such as Potter Valley and Comptche. These roads follow unspoiled rivers and streams and allow many other views of the natural beauty so characteristic of Mendocino County.

In order to protect and conserve the natural beauty of the County seen from County roads, a program should be established which would provide for detailed analyses and policies similar to those recommended herein for State highways.

RECOMMENDED POLICIES

Following is a list of policies recommended for consideration by the Planning Commission. The policies mainly are based upon criteria included in "The Scenic Route," prepared by the State Interdepartmental Committee on Scenic Highways. The policies should be reviewed by the Planning Commission, revised as necessary and adopted as the first major step in initiating action to protect Mendocino County's scenic highway corridors.

1. The following routes shall be considered for designation as scenic highways:
 - a. State Route 1 (91 miles)
 - b. State Route 101 (101 miles)
 - c. State Route 162 and Forest Road 7 to east County line (49 miles)
 - d. State Route 20 from Route 101 east to Lake County (12 miles)
 - e. State Route 20 from Willits west to Route 1
 - f. State Route 128*
2. For the designated highways, corridor studies shall be made to determine the scenic qualities requiring protection and leading to the establishment of corridor boundaries.
3. Corridor boundaries shall include varied and important views of natural and man-made scenic resources and, wherever possible, shall follow property lines, zoning or district boundaries, and other legal delineations to facilitate administration.
4. The corridor study for each highway shall include a program indicating the manner in which the scenic quality of the corridor would be protected.
5. County zoning and subdivision ordinances shall be revised, as necessary, to be consistent with the scenic highway corridor programs.

* Not analysed in this report but recommended for future analysis and possible designation.

6. Urban development shall be kept to a minimum in rural portions of the scenic corridor. Necessary traveler-related commercial facilities shall be allowed at appropriate locations.
7. Heights and setbacks of structures shall be regulated so as not to obstruct important views from scenic highways.
8. Unsightly uses shall not be permitted unless found to be necessary; in which case they should be screened by effective planting, grading and fencing.
9. On-premises signs shall be limited to the minimum number, type, height and size necessary for identification.
10. Off-premises outdoor advertising shall not be allowed within the scenic corridor, except for information panels giving advance notice to motorists.
11. New or relocated utility lines shall be placed underground.
12. Grading and earthmoving operations shall be performed with a minimum of disturbance to natural groundlines and shall result in a naturalistic form. Erosion control measures shall be provided.
13. Native vegetation shall be planted to hide scars and blend earthwork into the natural landscape.
14. Quarries shall be restored to an attractive appearance.
15. Edges of water bodies shall be preserved in their natural condition or treated to have an attractive, naturalistic appearance.
16. Existing specimens and stands of trees and other plant material of outstanding scenic value shall be preserved wherever possible.

17. Timber operations shall use selective cutting practices and be followed by a thorough cleanup.
18. Tree planting and reforestation programs shall be carried out based on their visual impact on highway users.
19. Selective clearing shall be done to reveal important views from the highway.

PROCEDURE FOR DESIGNATING OFFICIAL SCENIC HIGHWAYS

The corridor studies necessary for official designation of a highway as a Scenic Highway must be initiated by the jurisdiction which controls the adjacent lands. The responsibility for the corridor study may be delegated to a department, employee, commission or committee.

When such a study is initiated the District Engineer should be notified. The Highway District will then undertake a Corridor Survey which will be joined with the local jurisdiction's study to form the Scenic Highway Report.

A specific plan and program must be developed by the local jurisdiction assisted by the District Engineer's staff. This plan and program will insure the protection and enhancement of the existing natural and man-made scenic resources that contribute to the Highway's being included in the State Master Plan for Scenic Highways.

The plan and program are reviewed by the Highway District's staff and forwarded to the Interdepartmental Committee on Scenic Highways. After review by the Interdepartmental Committee the reports are forwarded to the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee reviews the information and recommends to the Director of the Department of Transportation whether the highway should be designated.

County roads may be designated by the County Board of Supervisors after the State Director of Transportation has found that all requirements have been met. The standards and requirements for the State Scenic Highways apply to County Scenic Highway;; however, the Division of Highways will not undertake a County Scenic Highway Study.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The route analyses point out that there are abundant scenic qualities to which the highway traveler in Mendocino County is exposed. The analyses also suggest that these qualities are impaired to a minor degree and subject to further degradation by inadequately controlled development.

The extreme action would be to move at once to draft scenic corridor regulations, determine corridor boundaries for the routes described in this report and apply the regulations to those corridors. The problem with this approach is that it does not take into account the attitudes of property owners and commercial interests who may fear economic loss due to such controls. Also, others in the County disapprove of the lack trust in extensive regulation of land.

As with all of the general plan elements, there must be a distinction made between the satisfaction of long-range objectives and the implementing measures which carry them out. The policies for scenic highways may seem severe to some if they are immediately applied to all property along the described routes. However, they need not be severe if programs to carry out the policies are applied gradually, consulting those affected.

Therefore, it is recommended that, after review and adoption by the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors adopt the Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan as a long-range guide to the protection and enhancement of the scenic qualities of Mendocino County.

It is further recommended that the Board formulate an implementation program based upon the recommendations of a County-wide Citizens Scenic Highway Committee. The Committee, with County staff assistance, would survey the adopted routes, note problems and assets, consult with property owners and other interested persons and develop a proposed program for the protection of scenic corridors.

RELATION OF THE PLAN TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

In compliance with Section 15148 of the California Administrative Code this plan document also serves as the Environmental Impact Report for the Scenic Highways Element of the Mendocino County General Plan. The required elements of the Environmental Impact Report are listed below, followed by the environmental statement, or, in cases where the statement is included in the text of the report, that section is identified.

1. Description of the Project: The Scenic Highway Element is one of the nine mandatory general plan elements required by State law in order to foster local initiative for conserving the State's scenic beauty along selected State and local highways throughout California. The element describes the State scenic highway program, provides a generalized inventory of selected routes within the County, recommends policies designed to protect scenic qualities and suggests further action.
2. Description of Environmental Setting: Route Analyses, pages 6-28.
3. Environmental Impact of the Proposed Action: The project would have no direct environmental impact. Its effect would be to encourage consideration of the scenic quality of highway corridors and to discourage changes within the corridors that would be detrimental to the scenic quality.
4. Adverse Environmental Effects Which Cannot be Avoided if the Proposed Is Implemented: None.
5. Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize the Impact: Although the Scenic Highway Element has no environmental impact requiring mitigation, it does proposed methods of mitigating the impact of other projects; see Recommended Policies, pages 31-32.

6. Alternatives to the Proposed Action:
 - a. No project would be in violation of the State requirement to include a Scenic Highway Element in the General Plan.
 - b. The Element could recommend fewer, less restrictive policies but would then conform less with the intent of State law.
 - c. The Element could contain more detailed inventory and analysis of County road corridors and their scenic qualities. This alternative would require more time and a larger budget than was available.
7. Relationship Between Local Short-Term Use of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity: The Scenic Highways Element is intended to mitigate adverse effects of local short term use of man's environment, as reflected in future projects within scenic corridors. This would help to maintain an enhance long-term productivity of scenic quality.
8. Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Involved in the Proposed Action Should It be Implemented: None; failure to implement would contribute to gradual scenic deterioration.
9. Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Action: The Scenic Highway Element proposes policies which would protect scenic qualities of the most visible portions of Mendocino County, thereby preserving its desirability as a place to live and to visit. The extent to which this induces growth is not measurable and would have no noticeable effect on projected trends. Some elements of growth within the County would be influenced either by being modified in character or by locating outside the scenic corridors.
10. Organizations and Persons Consulted: Mendocino County Planning Department, Philip Gorny, Senior Planner and Charles Frank, Planner II; and Caltrans.

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8. Alternatives to the Proposed Action:
 - a. The project would be in violation of the State and a scenic highway element in the General Plan.
 - b. The Element could recommend fewer, less restricted, then conform less with the intent of State law.
 - c. The Element could contain more detailed inventory and analysis of County road corridors and their scenic qualities. This alternative would require more time and a larger budget than was available.
9. Relationship between Local Short-Term Use of Land's Environment and the Enhancement and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity: The scenic highways element is intended to mitigate adverse effects of local short term use of land's environment, as reflected in future projects within scenic corridors. This would help to maintain an enhanced long-term productivity of scenic quality.
10. Irreversible/Environmental Changes Which Would be Involved in the Proposed Action Should the Proposed Action: Failure to implement would contribute to gradual scenic deterioration.
11. Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Action: The scenic highway element proposes policies which would protect scenic qualities of scenic corridors portions of Mendocino County, thereby preserving its desirability as a place to live and to visit. The extent to which this impact would be measurable and would have a noticeable effect on protected scenic elements of growth within the County would be influenced either by being restricted in character or by locating outside the scenic corridor.
12. Regulations and Policies: Mendocino County Planning Department, Planning Commission and County Board of Supervisors, Planning II and California

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